

## **Bossier, Huntington, Byrd top Bossier Invitational field**

Written by Russell Hedges

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The Bossier Bearkats and the Huntington Raiders have won the Bossier Invitational boys basketball tournament three times each since 2007.

Both are among the favorites in the 73rd annual tournament, which begins today at Bossier High School and Airline High School. The tournament is sponsored by Specialists Hospital Shreveport and Bossier Federal Credit Union.

Three games were originally scheduled for Rusheon Middle School today but they have been moved to Airline. Bossier coach Jeremiah Williams said he didn't think floor conditions at Rusheon were suitable for high school games after going to the gym Wednesday morning. He said he thought the floor was too slick.

Bossier (13-3) has won the tournament three times in the last four years. Last year, the Bearkats edged Airline 55-54 in overtime in championship game.

Huntington (12-2) defeated Bossier 52-50 in the 2011 championship game and also won titles in 2007 and 2008.

The teams are in opposite brackets and could meet in Saturday's championship game, but there are some obstacles in the way.

Mansfield (10-6) and Captain Shreve (6-11), who made the semifinals in the Doc Edwards Invitational last week, are also in the field. Byrd, which won the Haughton tournament, brings a 13-2 record into the tournament.

This year's tournament boasts one new wrinkle. While there is still no consolation bracket, the first-round losers will face off, giving them another game. In the past, it's been one and done.

This will enable teams to possibly gain some power rating points.

Bossier is coming a 43-42 loss to Ouachita Saturday in the Doc Edwards championship game. The loss ended a 10-game winning streak.

Tevin Robertson, a 6-foot-4 post player, led the Bearkats with 20 points.

Robertson is Bossier's second-leading scorer at 12.8 points per game. Devonte Hall leads the Bearkats at 12.9 a game. Rashard Owens (10.7) and Deorvion Robinson (10.1) also average in double figures.

The Bearkats, though, were plagued by poor shooting in the Doc Edwards tournament. Bossier faces Wossman (7-7) in the first round at 7 tonight at Bossier.

Huntington was upset by North Webster 81-68 in the first round of the Doc Edwards tournament. But the Raiders stormed back and won the consolation with ease, routing Pelican 90-50 in the finals.

Six-foot-7 Brandon Sheppard, Kenmorris Kendrick and Chance Chambers lead the Raiders.

Chad Lott, Justin McPhails, Jacory Holmes and Tim Gaines are among Byrd's top players.

Mansfield (10-6) has one of the area's top players in guard Verlan Hunter.

In addition to Bossier, three other parish teams are in the tournament.

Airline (3-9) faces Green Oaks (10-6) at 6:30 at Airline. Parkway (4-8) takes on Booker T.

Washington (10-4) at 8 at Airline, and Louisiana New Tech at Plain Dealing (3-8) plays at 8:30

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Hayden Hildebrand, Airline's All-Parish guard, returned last week. He had surgery on his right knee after the football season.

The quarterfinals are Friday and the semifinals and finals are Saturday at Bossier.